



# *Biblical Theology*

The History of Theology  
From Adam to Christ

or

The Nature, Origin, Development,  
and Study of Theological Truth,  
In Six Books

by John Owen, D.D.

An English interpretation from  
the Latin text of William Goold, D.D.,  
by Stephen P. Westcott, Ph.D.



SOLI DEO GLORIA PUBLICATIONS

*. . . for instruction in righteousness . . .*

Published by  
**Soli Deo Gloria Publications**  
An imprint of Reformation Heritage Books  
2965 Leonard St., NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
616-977-0889 / Fax 616-285-3246  
e-mail: [orders@heritagebooks.org](mailto:orders@heritagebooks.org)  
website: [www.heritagebooks.org](http://www.heritagebooks.org)

*Biblical Theology* was first published in Latin at  
Oxford in 1661. This English translation is  
by Stephen P. Westcott, Ph.D., and is  
© 1994 by Soli Deo Gloria.

ISBN 978-1-877611-83-4

Ninth Printing 2019

*For additional Reformed literature, both new and used, request a  
free book list from Reformation Heritage Books at the above address.*

# *Biblical Theology*

## The History of Theology From Adam to Christ



In which are examined the origins and progress of  
both true and false religious worship, and the most notable  
declensions and revivals of the church, from the very  
beginning of the world.

With additional discussions on Universal Grace,  
the Rise of the Sciences, Bellarmine's Roman "Notes of  
the Church," the Origin of Writing, the Antiquity of the  
Hebrew Language, and its Vowel-Pointing, Translations  
of Sacred Scripture, Jewish Rites, and Other Matters.



"Cast down but not destroyed," 2 Corinthians 4:9  
"God had given me this leisure" - Virgil





# Index of Books and Chapters

---

Publisher's Note . . . . .	iii
Introduction by Dr. J.I. Packer . . . . .	xi
Prefatory Notes to the Latin Edition . . . . .	xiv
Prefatory Notes to the English Edition . . . . .	xvi
John Owen's Epistle to the Reader . . . . .	xxii

## BOOK I Natural Theology

Chapter 1	Theology in General . . . . .	1
Chapter 2	Theology in General . . . . .	7
Chapter 3	Theology in General Concluded. . . . .	14
Chapter 4	The Natural Theology of the First Man . . . .	20
Chapter 5	The Fall and the Loss of Natural Theology	30
Chapter 6	The Insufficiency of Natural Theology for Salvation . . . . .	44
	DIGRESSION ON UNIVERSAL GRACE . . .	47
Chapter 7	Natural Theology Under Total Depravity . . .	83
Chapter 8	Natural Theology Under Total Depravity . . .	100

Chapter 9	Natural Theology Under Total Depravity, Concluded . . . . .	142
	BELLARMINE'S ROMAN "NOTES" OF THE CHURCH . . . . .	144

## **BOOK II**

### **Theology from Adam to Noah**

Chapter 1	The Renewal of Theology After the Fall . . . .	169
Chapter 2	The Principles of Post-Lapsarian Theology	184
Chapter 3	The Second Antediluvian Reformation of the Church . . . . .	191

## **BOOK III**

### **Theology from Noah to Abraham**

Chapter 1	The Noahchian Covenant and the Noahchian Church . . . . .	202
Chapter 2	The Original Language, the Confusion of Languages, and the Sibylline Oracle . . . . .	223
Chapter 3	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	242
Chapter 4	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	251
Chapter 5	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	264
Chapter 6	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	271
Chapter 7	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	280
Chapter 8	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	288
Chapter 9	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	300

<b>Index</b>		<b>vii</b>
Chapter 10	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	307
Chapter 11	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	313
Chapter 12	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry . . . . .	342
Chapter 13	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry. . . . .	346
Chapter 14	The Origin and Progress of Idolatry, Concluded . . . . .	354

## **BOOK IV**

### **Theology from Abraham to Moses**

Chapter 1	The Theology of Abraham . . . . .	359
Chapter 2	The Theology of Moses. . . . .	370
	DIGRESSION ON THE ORIGIN OF WRITING . . . . .	378
	DIGRESSION ON THE ANTIQUITY OF HEBREW . . . . .	395
Chapter 3	The Theology of Moses . . . . .	432

## **BOOK V**

### **Theology from Moses to Christ**

Chapter 1	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology . . . . .	439
Chapter 2	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology . . . . .	443
Chapter 3	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology . . . . .	446

Chapter 4	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology .....	453
Chapter 5	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology .....	457
Chapter 6	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology .....	461
Chapter 7	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology .....	466
Chapter 8	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology .....	474
Chapter 9	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology .....	478
Chapter 10	The Corruption and Solemn Restoration of Mosaic Theology .....	483
Chapter 11	The Final Abolition of Mosaic Theology ..	487
Chapter 12	Ezra's Reformation of the Jewish Church ..	489
	DIGRESSION OF THE HEBREW VOWEL-POINTS .....	495
Chapter 13	Ezra's Reformation of the Jewish Church Concluded .....	534
Chapter 14	The Final Apostasy of the Jewish Church ..	537
	DIGRESSION ON THE SEPTUAGINT GREEK VERSION .....	540
	DIGRESSION ON THE ORIGIN OF THE TARGUMS .....	546
Chapter 15	The Final Apostacy of the Jewish Church ..	554
	DIGRESSION ON JEWISH RITES AND CHRISTIANITY .....	560

<b>Chapter 16</b>	<b>The Final Apostacy of the Jewish Church, Concluded . . . . .</b>	<b>583</b>
-------------------	---	------------

**BOOK VI**  
**Evangelical Theology**

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Evangelical Theology . . . . .</b>	<b>591</b>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Evangelical Theology, Continued . . . . .</b>	<b>600</b>
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Evangelical Theology, Continued . . . . .</b>	<b>605</b>
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Evangelical Theology, Continued . . . . .</b>	<b>612</b>
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Evangelical Theology, Continued . . . . .</b>	<b>620</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Evangelical Theology, Continued . . . . .</b>	<b>636</b>
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Evangelical Theology, Continued . . . . .</b>	<b>651</b>
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Evangelical Theology, Concluded . . . . .</b>	<b>658</b>
	<b>DIGRESSION ON PHILOSOPHIC CORRUPTIONS OF THEOLOGY . . . . .</b>	<b>668</b>
<b>Chapter 9</b>	<b>On the Study of Theology . . . . .</b>	<b>685</b>

**Editor's Notes to the English Version**

<b>Book I . . . . .</b>	<b>704</b>
<b>Book II . . . . .</b>	<b>707</b>
<b>Book III . . . . .</b>	<b>708</b>
<b>Book IV . . . . .</b>	<b>713</b>
<b>Book V . . . . .</b>	<b>716</b>
<b>Book VI . . . . .</b>	<b>720</b>

Index of Scripture . . . . .	726
Index of Names . . . . .	738
Owen's References to Authors and Works Cited . . . . .	747

## APPENDIX

A Defense of Scripture against Modern Fanaticism . . . . .	769
1. Editor's Introduction to the Translation . . . . .	772
2. John Owen's Epistle to the Reader . . . . .	775
3. Chapter 1: Why Scripture Is, and may be Termed, the Word of God . . . . .	777
4. Chapter 2: On the Interpretation of Scripture . . . . .	793
5. Chapter 3: On the Perfection of Scripture . . . .	817
6. Chapter 4: On "Inner Light" and Scripture . . .	839
7. Editor's notes . . . . .	855
8. Index of Scripture . . . . .	857

# Foreword

---

The study of the historical stages by which God's revelation was given to mankind, and came to be grasped, internalized, and responded to in a corporate way by God's people, is nowadays called "Biblical Theology." The name goes back to the eighteenth century, when the rationalist J.P. Gabler coined it to distinguish this study from dogmatic theology, the formulation and defense of the doctrines of the faith. Biblical Theology is not, in fact, a very good name for the purpose, first because you cannot tell from the name that the study has a distinctive historical focus, and second because it seems to imply that other disciplines within the organism of theology are not biblical. So it is no wonder that Geerhardus Vos, an all-time master in the field of Biblical Theology, wanted to call his area of enquiry "History of Revelation" instead. A further complication is that in this century the name "Biblical Theology" has been claimed for a movement among critical scholars that explores biblical faith on the basis of scepticism, more or less, about the biblical documents; but that movement has pretty much fallen apart, as it was bound to do, so its use of the name need not concern us further. For Bible scholars in the believing Protestant stream, Vos's own classic *Biblical Theology* (1949) marks out the field in a definitive way, and has established itself as the vantage point from which other ventures in this particular historical enquiry are now surveyed.

Gabler's distinction was and is academically helpful, as are all distinctions between things that differ; but it has to be said that humanly it has proved most unhelpful, for it has led historically-minded exegetes not to bother about theology and theologically-minded dogmaticians not to bother about exegesis, and both have lost out as a result. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by contrast, theologians knew that the various disciplines of theology are

really a single organism of divine wisdom, and that as their trade required them to apply truth to life pastorally, so it required them to gather and synthesize that truth exegetically. Since Reformation exegesis was historical as well as grammatical, we should not be surprised to learn that men like Calvin and Bullinger in sixteenth-century Switzerland, and Koch (Cocceius) and Witsius in seventeenth-century Holland, went quite deeply into Biblical Theology. Nor should we wonder when we find that John Owen, Koch's contemporary and the greatest Puritan theologian, produced a treatise on the progress of theology in this world, and the proper way for Christians to study it, which covers in a pioneering way and from a consistently believing standpoint the whole field of Biblical Theology as Vos later came to define it.

Published in Latin in 1661 as a contribution to international Reformed scholarship, with a vast title that translates as *Theological Affirmations of All Sorts, Or, Of the Nature, Rise, Progress, and Study, of True Theology...with Digressions on Universal Grace, the Rise of the Sciences, Marks of the Roman Church, the Origin of Writing, Ancient Hebrew Script, Hebrew Punctuation, Jewish Versions and Forms of Worship, and Other Things*, the treatise draws on a very wide range of learning, and some of the learning is, inevitably, out of date. Most of it, however, is not, and the sixth and final part in particular, where Owen characterizes evangelical theology as a gift of the Holy Spirit generating faith in Christ, holiness through Christ, and worship of Christ, is pure gold. The last chapter, on the conditions, intellectual, moral and spiritual, for fruitfulness in the theological study of the Scriptures, suggests that the work began life as lectures to students in Oxford University, where Owen was Vice-Chancellor from 1652 to 1657. To have it now—at last!—in English is a great boon.

One oddity merits mention. The lumbering style of Owen's English, with its weird words, Latinized word-order, labored and tortuous exactness, and often wearisome repetitiveness, is well known. But his Latin is taut, brisk, clear and tidy, and in translation reads more easily than do his twisted



paragraphs in his mother tongue.

All the qualities we expect of Owen—the focus on God, the passion for Christ, the honoring of the Holy Spirit, the shattering depth of insight into human sinfulness and perversity, the concern for holiness, the radical view of regeneration, the vision of the church as a spiritual fellowship that worships, the distrust of philosophical schemes and styles for dealing with divine things, the celebration of God's wisdom in giving the Scriptures in the form in which we have them—all are seen here. The present treatise is vintage Owen, searching and spiritual, devotional and doxological, the product of a masterful mind and a humble heart. Those with a taste for Owen, or for theology, or (best of all) for both, will read this Puritan proto-Biblical Theology with joy, and join with me in expressing thanks to *Soli Deo Gloria* for so worth-while a publication which does us so much good. Read on, then, and prosper!

J.I. Packer  
Regent College  
March 1994

# Prefatory Notes

---

## The Latin Editions

The first edition of the following work was published at Oxford in 1661. After a reference to theology in general, the author discusses the natural theology of the first man with its corruption on the fall and, afterwards, theology in all its subsequent phases; as Adamic or antediluvian, Noachic or postdiluvian, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Evangelical. Numerous digressions are asserted on universal grace, the origin of the sciences, the notes of the Romish church, the origin of letters, the ancient Hebrew letters, the Hebrew points, the versions of Scripture, the religious rites of the Jews, and on the admixture of philosophy with theology. The work is introduced by a long preface, followed by a curious poem containing an analysis of it. The initials appended to the poem are T.G., which are supposed to represent the name of Thomas Goodwin. The work was printed at Bremen in 1684 and at Franeker in 1700. In these reprints, great professions of accuracy were made, which a careful examination by no means tends to confirm. The original edition was disfigured with errata on almost every page, and the subsequent editions are hardly entitled to much praise for the correction of those numerous blunders, while errata of their own are not uncommon. The present is the fourth edition of the work, as it was not included in the collection of the author's works edited by Mr. Russell and published in 1826.

Mr. Orme mentions that a Rev. John Hooper had prepared a translation of the work which, however, seems never to have been published. There is a translation of the last book of it by the Rev. John Craig of Avonbridge. The treatise is simply a historial dissertation on the origin and progress of theology in a spirit thoroughly evangelical, and

in a style somewhat remarkable for the power and compass of its Latinity. At times, in the strokes of the author directed against Popish error, there are specimens of the same quiet and effective sarcasm which marks his replies to Vincent Cane. While many of the views broached on the collateral topics considered in the various digressions with which the works abound are obsolete and superceded by modern investigation, the work, as a whole, is full of scriptural truth and pious sentiment. The last book is especially valuable as conveying to us the ripe experience of England's greatest theologian in regard to the best method of prosecuting sacred studies. Mr. Ryland of Northampton describes the work as entitled to rank in theological literature on a level with the *Principia* of Newton in science, as "an incomparable work, perhaps the very greatest of the kind ever written by a British divine." We doubt if most readers would acquiesce in this very fervent eulogy, while there can be little hesitation in acceding to the more cautious and studied language of Mr. Orme, who affirms that "the work discovers a vast extent of reading, and a profound acquaintance with the whole compass of profane and sacred learning." Indeed, no work of Dr. Owen, in his native tongue, leaves such an impression of the extent and variety of its erudition; and, to judge from it, no contemporary name bears away the palm of decided superiority to our author, either in respect of spiritual wisdom or general learning. The compression requisite to overtake the vast field before him obliges him occasionally to condense within narrow limits an amazing extent of truth; so that no diffuseness appears in his narrative, and the attention of the readers seldom flags under the prolix heaviness which often mars the effect of his other productions.

William H. Goold, D.D.  
1850

## The English Interpretation

Before William Goold was requested to pen the above "prefatory note," for what was to become volume 17 of the definitive 24 volume set of Owen's "Works," the publishers had seriously considered issuing the *Theologoumena Pantadapa*, or *Biblical Theology*, in English translation. It is their reasons for *not* doing so which are of most interest to us today, for their conclusion was that "so far as they can ascertain, it is a work of such a nature that those who are most likely to take an interest in it would prefer to have it IN THE LATIN TEXT" (Johnstone & Hunter, "Prospectus for the volumes of Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews and Theologoumena," Edinburgh, 1850). That is simply to say that in 1850 we are still within a high water mark of Classical and Latin scholarship, when a man who could not bandy Latin tags and Greek quotations at ease could hardly expect a welcome in "cultured" or "learned" society, and when all of the larger evangelical and Reformed denominations still insisted on a "thoroughly learned" ministry. At Columbia Seminary, Thornwell's standard theology text down to his death in 1862 was Calvin's *Institutes* in Latin. Princeton used Turretine's *Institutio Theologicae Elencticae* until the advent of Charles Hodge's "Systematic Theology" in 1873, and the same text was standard in other Reformed colleges on both sides of the Atlantic.

Indeed, this situation simply refers us back to Owen's own day when the deservedly-famed Westminster Assembly had recommended that a prospective pastor be examined "touching his skill in the original tongues, and his trial be made by reading the Hebrew and Greek testaments, and *rendering some portion of the same into Latin*" (Westminster Assembly, "Form of Church Government: Rules for Examination of Ministers," 1645).

But now, as great span of time has passed since Goold's day as separated him from Owen himself, and, more importantly, a greater revolution in ideas of higher and of theological education has (for better or worse) come to pass. Where now is the busy and pressured pastor who can afford

the time and labor to master Latin in addition to the Bible languages? And, assuming that some still do so, is the effort needed to dig out the golden gems of Owenian wisdom from the ore of ponderous Latin prose really good stewardship of time? And who will be at ease with or appreciate 108 quotations, mostly from Classical authors, sometimes just criptically alluded to, in a *single chapter* of a theology textbook (cf. Book I, Chapter 8, "Natural Theology Under Total Depravity")? The result has been, necessarily, that the *Theologoumena* has become Owen's great "forgotten work," unknown or mysterious even to owners of the otherwise "complete works," despite the fact that the author himself intended this to be his greatest and most enduring contribution to the advancement of Reformational theology. Like a stranded treasure ship, it has been beached and left high and dry by the receding tide of Classical scholarship, where it long lay amongst the wrecks of such great works of Reformed scholasticism as Calderwood's *Altare Damascenus* and Turretin's *Institutes* (Calderwood has never been issued in English; Turretine is, at long last, seeing the light in English dress; Presbyterian & Reformed Publishers, 3 Volumes, 1992 onward). In the meantime, generation after generation of Christians have, in turn, discovered Owen's *English* writings, which have been in constant demand on the second-hand market, in reprints, in paperback "simplifications," in extracts and off-prints. Certainly, then, the time has come when, if the Christian world realizes that it has been wronged in that a definitive biography of Owen has still not seen the light (J.I. Packer, "Introductory Essay to Owen's *Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, Banner of Truth, 1959, 1985), then even more has it been wronged in having no access to this, the most erudite work of Britain's greatest-ever theologian. To remedy this situation, the present volume is issued, being the *first-ever* publication of John Owen's *Biblical Theology* in the English language.

If, in Owen's day, English had been the international language it now is, and he had been free to write in his native tongue without restricting his purpose of benefiting the world-wide church of Christ, how would the work have

looked? More specifically, how would it have compared to what is issued here? We just can't say. Undoubtedly, seventeenth century prose and obsolete words and expressions would have this work as "heavy going" as the rest of our author's writings; factors which would have been more than compensated by the additional clarity of an original production, not flowing through the channels of another mind and another language. But this is mere speculation. Translation we must have if we are to have the *Biblical Theology* at all in English, and so some comments on the method employed may not be out of place. This rendering is an English *interpretation* of Owen's Latin work, and that term is stressed and used deliberately. This is because:

1. In practice, translation necessitates interpretation.

2. In theory, the whole literary genre of translation has become a controversial subject in our day. Commented Sir William Hamilton, "All languages, by the same word, express a multitude of thoughts, more or less differing from each other. We are obliged, from the context, from the tenor, and from the general analogy of the discourse, to determine the meaning." And the modern furor over Bible "versions" has sharpened and polarized opinions about translation principles in general (without giving due regard to the unique nature of GOD'S Book!) into "literalist" (verbalist) and "interpretationist" (dynamic equivalence) camps.

At an early stage of the preparation of this work, samples were given for assessment to two "experts" associated with the *same* Reformed publishing house. One reported that the work was not literal enough, saying that a first translation should be a definitive one, broadly comparable to the "Loeb" Classical editions. The other commented that the sample was *too literal*, and read too much like Latin-English. This was the same portion! Needless to say, no one translation could possibly satisfy both sets of criteria!

Any reader who agrees with the former comment is clearly well able to use the Latin original; and, as the original must always be preferred to *any* translation, I would respectfully refer him back to it. For the latter, I would quote

J.I. Packer's comments on Owen's *English* style, "Much of Owen's prose reads like a roughly dashed-off translation of a piece of thinking done in Ciceronian Latin" ("Introductory Essay to Owen's *Death of Death in the Death of Christ*").

So, if this English version has the same "feel" about it, I am satisfied that Owen's individual style has not been destroyed, and that my aim of making Owen speak to us in language he might have used if writing for us today has, at least in part, been achieved. The use of "interpretation" is intended to cover two other factors.

First, the original Latin text abounds in Hebrew and Greek quotations. All these have been translated and incorporated straight into the flow of the text for the ease of the reader. On the (very rare) occasions when an argument depends on a Hebrew or Greek word, these have been transliterated into their English equivalents.

Second, if the modern user was to be placed on a par with the original readership, it was obvious that he would need some help with the Classical references and allusions; which necessitates a little *additional* material beyond Owen's text. To this end, annotations in the text refer to an appendix of "Editor's Notes," where such matters are clarified and discussed. In the final renderings, I have occasionally felt the need to paraphrase, to change the order of some sentences, once or twice simply to "guess" what Owen was saying and, on an extreme occasion to omit a small section.

It is fair to say that the last two circumstances refer to plain corruptions in the Latin text from which no fair rendering can be made, and the omission is given verbatim in the "Editor's Notes." On the other hand, every effort has been made to free this version from the possibilities of a "one-man" translation and, for this, I am greatly indebted to two classical scholars, Mr. E.J. Young of Scunthorpe, and Mr. A.E. Jones of Ware, who, between them, produced large sections of this volume in a literal word-for-word translation which was used alongside the Latin text as a basis for the final renderings. So excellent was their work that large sections have been incorporated with only minimal change,

and it is no exaggeration to say that, without their labors, this volume would not have seen the light of day. However, as all final renderings and decisions were my own, to me alone belongs any fair criticism for deficiencies in this work as now presented to the Christian public. Any credit belongs—of right—to the author, John Owen.

Should a new generation of Christ's disciples be, in any way edified, encouraged, or built up in their most holy faith; and if, perchance, through them God chooses to bring others into a saving relationship with Himself through Christ, then the labors of author, translators, and editor will have been richly rewarded. To God be the Glory!

Stephen P. Westcott, Ph.D.  
Bristol, England  
November 1993



## JOHN OWEN'S REFERENCES TO AUTHORS AND WORKS CITED

---

Considerable difficulties are encountered when dealing with an old text containing many references to even earlier printed editions of ancient authors. Such editions contain many verbal discrepancies from the modern "standard" editions and translations, and quoted page numbers, of course, relate to editions long out of print and often unobtainable today. To attempt to "verify" all of Owen's quotations could be the work of a lifetime! To replace Owen's quotations by those from a modern edition might give greater accuracy, but would entirely mask the purpose Owen had in mind in making the extract, and reference to Book, chapter or line of a modern standard edition or translation could throw up many puzzling differences. But it is not the Classics which are relevant in this work, but rather Owen's understanding and use of them, his employment of them as theological and apologetical source material. Quotations have therefore been translated exactly as given by Owen. Greek quotations are usually given by Owen twice; in Greek and in his own Latin translation—in these cases both have been consulted for the English rendering supplied. The references are given within the text (as in the Latin edition) but in expanded form. They are not exhaustive, however, for many references are offered in so cryptic a fashion that (I presume) only a contemporary scholar of Owen's would be able to identify them with certainty.

# John Owen's Epistle to the Reader

---

To the kind reader who is sincerely concerned for evangelical truth, John Owen sends greetings.

Learned reader, if I was not convinced that it is in your best interest to accurately understand at least some of the matters which are investigated in this book, I should have preferred to cast the manuscript into the flames rather than to expose myself to the fires of opposition which so many men kindle against enterprises of this kind. Factors which, even singularly, have often driven men away from sacred study, have marched against me in massed array as I began this work for you. However, it is many years since I undertook, with much consideration and prayer, a life which is devoted to heavenly wisdom and divine truth. I have concluded to adhere to my intention, be it in the face of all those "demon-doubts" which frequently find access into the minds of men who are, in themselves, by no means evil. I know from experience the monstrous strength of that "lion in the way" (Proverbs 26:13), which (as is remarked by a man equally renowned in divine and in human truth) soon terrified the slothful from their duty; but I am the less frightened by it, the more I make trial of it! Of course, when there is serious consideration of those truths whose spiritual light grows daily more towards the perfect day, that enemy will find the more ways of displaying his ferocity. Nevertheless, the blinding prejudices which, for so many ages, clouded the minds of men and held them back from such an enterprise, have at last been dissipated in our generation so that we can hold out the highest hope that, relying as we do upon Divine strength and enabling to illuminate holy subjects, we shall not be

cheated of our desired aim.

Each succeeding generation has its own struggle in this work, and it is a comfort to recollect that the studies of good men who long ago passed through this life amidst envy, jealousy, hatred, and sectarian bitterness are often blessed to distant generations, while those who look only to themselves and personal advantage please only their contemporaries. It is not an unheard of thing that "the justice of a man's deeds is a cause of envy to his neighbor." We can rest assured that infinite wisdom, which controls all things, will always check-mate the vices of mortal men so that their puny efforts can never interrupt the onflowing of the ages and wonderful interactions of Providence in its predetermined paths. I can see no reason, therefore, why anyone who has begun this enterprise should abandon it through fear of opposition or surrender to malice. The hinge of my work does not turn upon such things, for, truly, anyone attempting solely to please men could not be a true servant of Christ.

For those laboring in the vineyard of the Lord, the Providence of God provides, more usually than not, a wonderful additional consolation. The seed that they sow in the earth may well be raked by malicious attacks and covered with the dung of abuse, but it will spring up the more mightily and abundantly than any which saw nothing but the sweet smelling breezes of popular applause. I have been determined, ever since I set to mind to this work, to strictly suffer the abuse and opposition of men to flow serenely past me, provided only that I be of service to those set seriously to "seeking the truth in love." The conceited thoughts of some, and the envy of rivalry in others, make great threats against my labors, but I make them of little account to me. Let envy do what it will, I would never have begun any work which was not fully compatible with the office which I have long held in the Church. The very title page of this book will demonstrate, without further explanation from me, the intention of the work I have undertaken. Clearly it attempts to set out the nature of true Theology, and maps out the course

and method by which others may follow in a God-honoring fashion. How far I have been successful in determining the mind of Christ it remains for you, learned and Christian reader, to judge, for this vitally concerns you and will be your share in these labors to carefully weigh and determine.

In order that I may impart to you more fully the object of my studies in this work, a number of matters must be looked into more thoroughly, and views must be examined which, as they have proved stumbling blocks to many students of Theology, this work has presented an opportunity (in some instances indeed a necessity) of examining. Not only does the faculty of reason—which, after all, distinguishes men from the brute creation—teach us that we have not been created for our own purposes, but the Gospel teaches that we shall all at last be called on to render an account of the gifts which have so freely been bestowed by Christ. I have dealt with subjects difficult and thorny. Does anyone think I have run into the thorns heedlessly or unawares? Not me! I approach the thickets with no other reason but to extricate men whom I see already caught up and held there. I have long preferred to point out, as it were, with my outstretched finger, the true path and would rather keep men on it than rescue them when they stray aside.

Now there are men (let us mention them first) who would think the whole attempt to investigate Divine truth a needless waste of time. They can see no sufficient reason why anyone should direct the sharp edge of his intellect upon such studies. They may even advance reasons with a show of plausibility for their opinion (or rather their madness). I have no intention of following up and refuting such ideas. First, it would take me far away from my purpose; and, second, behind it all lies concealed hatred for holiness and gospel truth. It would be ridiculous to expend energy battling with those who, as has been said, "Hide one thing in their heart, proclaiming another."

There are other men who might addict themselves to

this study for very wrong reasons. Perhaps they lack the intellect for more profitable tasks, or have nothing else at home that they can do, no other means of support. They would consider that it is most unreasonable if a man with more than their sharpness of mind and vigorous energy should give himself to it, rather than to some more sublime and profitable occupation! They cannot think or dream that this Divine wisdom might be sought by anyone, unless it was a means to wealth, riches, honor, popular esteem, or the patronage of princes. They are dangerous to true students by clamoring that the boundaries of our subject be set so narrowly that the most idle, the most worldly-busy, nay, the most wicked of mortals might be considered learned. The wonderful riches of holy truth beyond these limits they esteem to be proper to the realm of the fiction-writer, the obscure pedant, or the wholly and ever unknowable. They might, in fact, consider some information on Theology a necessity for their lives and standing. But, oh, they would think a precise and painstaking study of Scripture to bring many disadvantages! Why, it would be against the public peace and disturb the pleasant, easy, religious feelings of the people (product of damning ignorance!). It must be resisted at all costs.

It would be too easy to waste time and effort on refuting the views of such slothful brutes. I shall simply retort that "these speak evil of those things which they know not" (Jude 1). In blind ignorance of the nature, worth and object of Theology, they come and go and perish to all eternity. Like those hypocrites of old they complain, "Behold, what a weariness is it!" and "What profit is in it?" (Malachi 1:13, 3:14). Anyone who seriously considers that God never requires of us greater strictness in obeying His Commandments, or shows greater grace in his promises than He commands us to use our intellects to gain knowledge of Him, could never agree with them unless they too are burdened down with dominant sin. Naturally, there are but few who, with open face, condemn as folly all study of heavenly wisdom; if there are,

they are slavishly incapable of an exertion, or they are plainly wicked. But many more, and that of men who would scorn to be thought evil, in practice despise any time spent on Theological study as a fruitless waste of time. But are not all men to be concerned in some degree with this subject, if they value the salvation of their souls? How much more, then, those who are professionally concerned as ministers of the sacred mysteries of our religion? By such men as these, the very name of Theology has long been perverted to be a cloak for all manner of other pursuits—politicians, doctors, lawyers, poets, orators, historians and philosophers might be detected in number. Would that they would come forward in their true colors, for they are nothing so little as what they profess to be! It is long since that we made the discovery that outward appearance, special garments, stately gait, and features composed with much practice to present a false but convincing impression of modesty can be the concealment for all manner of pride, insolence and stubbornness. Rank, honor, domination, and pride do not make theologians. These deceptions arise because they neither care about nor love the mysteries of Divine wisdom. Although they employ its language for their own ends, all the while they are at secret enmity to all heavenly and spiritual virtue, all Godly purity and power.

But let us pass from this group; verily, they have their reward. The counsels of a man for those experiencing difficulties in their study of theology are of no use to men whose greatest hindrance is themselves! Indeed, the greatest obstacle to all students of theology is an inborn and destructive darkness of mind. Seek to break through that by the power and Spirit of Him who once commanded light to shine forth out of darkness. Without this aid, anyone who invests time and effort on the study of theology will find that he is hunting for the wind with a net! We will deal with inborn blindness of mind systematically in its proper place in the book, so we will pass it over at this point and look briefly at some things which have proved great hindrances to those setting out

on this study in the past. We might divide the difficulties into two classes: (a) those which concern the student; and (b) those concerning the subject matter itself. We shall deal with the first by touching upon it lightly in one or two examples, and consider the second as far as will fulfill our design and purpose.

First, we must face up to the factor of sloth, by which we may observe some students (and no small number of them at that) growing weary of their work. It is easy to point the finger at this evil but, if I were to set out fully all that might be brought forward for its condemnation, my discussion would be endless. Such is the shame of sloth that even the most slothful take the name very badly and are forced to mitigate its effects so far as concerns their reputation and self-interest. Indeed, they would join in its condemnation in word, if not in deed. I shall relieve myself of the burden of proving its evil nature and be content with exposing its hidden sources so as to encourage anyone to combat it who has determined not to let the fruit of his whole life be endangered by a single vice. The chief spring of sloth is indwelling sin, ever itching for the pursuit of pleasure. Any mind that is enslaved to lust, desire, and wantonness is unable to give serious attention to our subject. If you are not temperate and industrious, your labors will be in vain. All servitude enfeebles the mind, most of all slavery to sin. Considering that a mind which has surrendered to sensuality will shrink from all mental effort, and that the vices of the body hold the mind in the chains of darkness, so, by contrast, a man dedicated to a life of study in things divine and spiritual will recoil from the flesh and from sloth. Sadly, you will see about you many men who should be dedicated to the study and expounding of God's Word, but who hold their positions by any number of pretexts, names, and titles, who are just like worn-out horses. No goad will force them onward in the course they have begun. Their fallen condition by nature has been compounded with new sins.

Note this especially in men who have attained their

object in life—a good living perhaps—and to achieve it have, for some time, been forced to carry the heavy burden of mental effort. Nothing will make them go on in the study of God's truth. Truly, it is impossible for a man to be a lover of God and a lover of pleasure at the same time! Are there not examples of utterly shameless defection from the holy doctrines of Christ, and those who expose themselves negligently, without a care to all the temptations, to sensual pursuits which this evil world holds out seductively to all men? Yes, some may even be found who pursue with zeal those temptations which are the kindling wood of sinful pleasure for themselves, and horrible inducements to others to follow them in sin. Out of the deep root of fallen nature comes this shoot of destruction, driving on to eternal death those who have turned away from arduous but divine labors, to sink into empty, foul, and fatal habits. Some men, I know, are willing for the wearisomeness of study out of an excessive lusting for worldly wealth, all the while promising themselves that future ease which will destroy all their potential for useful work. Some persist in study until they obtain their goal, that is, have grasped the wealth or honor which was all along their aim in study. The greater part, however, gradually wavering, soon surrender themselves to sin and shameless idleness. It is for no other reason than a failure to subdue sinful nature and carnal habits before the Spirit and grace of Christ that we see so many men who profess to have committed themselves to the study of the liberal arts and, especially, theology finally grow weary and fall into the ways of negligence and sloth. No mind which is sick by the infection of vice will ever be expected to set itself on any honest enterprise or any task at all worthy of praise. What could be imagined more foolish or ridiculous than a man who indulges in arrogance, pride, ambition, or the corrupt desires of sinful nature, claiming that he can devote himself honestly and fruitfully to the study of the holy revelation of God's will in Christ, or that he can hope to persevere in a discipline which he must simply endure as long as necessary,



the whole time having a mind hopelessly evil.

We see also in many men a sort of incurable malady of intellect by which, when they finally despair of success, they lapse into a mindless inactivity. How rare is godly discrimination to be found in those whose business it is to train the minds of students!

Teachers who labor merely for money will spend their efforts upon all students without distinction, while anyone may be accepted in schools and even universities provided only he knows how to count! The result is that many who walk about in gowns are as fitted for serious study as the fox is for the plow. Allow them to expend a little effort on ventures that prove fruitless and barren, then see them settle back into idleness and sloth. It would be better if they abandoned good studies hastily undertaken if it would not lead them to study evil. Turning away from labors for which they may have been suited to studies for which they are completely unfit, they soon grow weary of the toil but, being ashamed to return to occupations, they give themselves over to idleness and sin. All around them is the example of the world in open revolt against the teachings of Jesus Christ, and not so much liable to as eagerly seeking out all manner of vice. Let this contagion find students who have begun to despair of success because of the hard work involved; then soon all modesty, piety, self-denial, and preparation for carrying the cross will also be neglected until, whatever the pretense, they will seek to be conformed as closely as possible to the world without. Hence we find some abandoning themselves to ease and debauchery, behaving arrogantly, squandering their talents, paying no heed to the example of better men, despising the life of discipleship (indeed, all moderation), and yet never doubting that the heaven they despise will roll wisdom down into their laps! What else can be expected by men of this sort who, in relaxing the labor of their studies, destroy the strength of their own intellects by corrosive sloth? Students must watch earnestly for the beginnings of this destructive temptation to idleness and stand ready to re-

sist it with vigor. Without this, they will soon be deceived by pride and self-esteem into becoming very Suffenuses [Suffenus, a bad but arrogant poet ridiculed by Catullus], so that no sober minded man would ever expect them to achieve any results of value or significance at all.

In the second place, many students of theology who are not brought down by idleness or pleasure seeking are sadly driven off course and greatly impeded in their search for divine truth by the influence of sects, factions, and heresies. In religious studies, differences of opinion are very prone to harden into differences of sect. Secondary matters then come into play to widen the breach. How frequently we find a man, who adheres to a sect which is numerous in his own corner of the world, consider it to be his life's work to do nothing but condemn and vilify all other parties as guilty of folly and sin. This may give the impression that the differences are more ones of locality than reality, and places give their names to sects but, whatever their origin, it is certain that a sect becomes more destructive the greater the number of its adherents as it engenders a servile party—in a word, a sectarian spirit.

But it is not my intention to discuss the nature of sectarianism or condemn its vices. I wish merely to demonstrate how zeal for a sect will obscure zeal for true wisdom. This is quite certain, for the leaders of a sect will always fight against any knowledge beyond the tenets that make their distinctives, and a sectary must surrender to the group all piety, knowledge, doctrine, and wisdom. Imagine the evils which arise when this servile spirit takes hold on minds which are already open to receive unjust suspicions and, like all natural minds, always prone to evil thoughts, and how fatally any ability to search for the truth will be injured. What is worse, a sectarian spirit induces into the thinking an evil, arrogant, and disputacious tendency; the very thing with which the Holy Spirit cannot be expected to associate His gifts. "What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him will He teach in the way that He shall choose.... The secret of the